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News and Policy Updates

In addition to the comprehensive description of [policies about Club single-day and multi-day trips](#) [1], there are occasionally additional Club news and policy updates:

- June 2009
 - [No partial-year memberships](#)
 - [Membership fee cannot be paid by credit card](#)
- January 2009
 - [Outings will start at new time \(9:45 a.m.\) beginning in April 2009](#)
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The Club used to be known as the Ottawa Hostel Outdoor Club (OHOC). Many of these updates were developed during that time. Except for the entry related to writing a cheque, all references to OHOC have been left as-is.

Please note that some of these policies have subsequently changed. For instance, with the introduction of the online membership registration, membership can be paid using a credit card via PayPal (and this is encouraged).

No Partial-year Memberships (Executive Resolution, June 2009)

At the 2006 AGM, the question was raised as to whether OHOC could have partial-year memberships. The OHOC executive decided *against* having partial-year memberships at its June 2009 board meeting because it would

- add complexity to the selling of memberships and would make the job of the Membership Secretary more time-consuming and complicated
 - impact payments to the Hostel (a portion of the OHOC membership fee goes to the Ottawa Hostel)
 - require the amending of the memorandum of understanding between OHOC and the Hostel because of the reduced fee for a half-year membership
 - discourage multi-season participation by people (someone who was a summer member might not bother to come out for winter activities and vice versa)
 - raise the complication as to whether a summer member could go to a winter social event and vice versa
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Membership Fee Cannot Be Paid By Credit Card (Executive Resolution, June 2009)

The question has been occasionally raised as to whether it would be possible to pay the Club membership fee by credit card. The OHOC executive decided *against* having payment of membership fees by credit card at its June 2009 board meeting because

- the Club would need to get a credit profile
 - a machine would be needed
 - it would cost the Club \$10 to \$20 per month
 - the Club would need to use Paypal along with the credit card, and using Paypal doesn't make sense because
 - along with OHOC needing to obtain a Paypal account, each of our would-be members would also have to do this
 - the Club would still need a signature for insurance purposes, so there is no gain by using Paypal
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Outings will Start at New Time Beginning in April, 2009 (Executive Resolution, January 2009)

OHOC has a new time for beginning our outings!! Starting in April, all activities will have a REGISTER-BY time of 9:45 a.m. In other words, be there and sign up BEFORE 9:45 a.m.

We have noticed, when outings start at a later time, that more people show up. And wouldn't that be nice? Also, a clear majority of respondents to our first-ever electronic survey last fall favoured a later time. So, on January 12, 2009 your Executive decided to respond to member demand and institute a later start time. So, starting in April, SHOW UP BEFORE 9:45 a.m. AND REGISTER. This applies to hiking, canoeing, and cycling, and may apply later to snowshoeing.

Financial Guidelines for Leaders of Multi-day Trips (Executive Resolution, January 2009)

Our Club encourages people to lead trips. Both the document entitled [Day and Weekend Trip Guide for Leaders and Participants](#) [2] as well as this policy are intended to be helpful.

1. The Club will extend its liability insurance to approved trip leaders. To be covered by the Club's liability insurance,
 - your trip must be approved by your co-ordinator, *and*
 - the Club's sign-up sheets must be properly filled out and utilized.
2. The Club offers loans to leaders of up to \$500 per trip to decrease the amount of personal funds that leaders need to commit up-front to book accommodation. Application may be made to the Treasurer.
3. Our Club does not operate for profit, so the entire cost of a multi-day trip will be shared amongst its participants.
4. All deposit cheques must be made out to O.H.O.C. "OOC" and the leader must send them to the Treasurer. All such deposits will be cashed.
5. The Club hopes that adherence to the following recommendations regarding managing costs and reducing the probability of trip deficits will prevent the occurrence of most problems and that this will provide the best possible support for our leaders. Everyone needs to know that loans are meant to be repaid. It is expected that multi-day trips will not incur a monetary deficit. Requests for reimbursement of deficits will be evaluated by the Executive on a case-by-case basis and will be evaluated based on the leader's adherence to the following recommendations.

What leaders can do to manage costs and reduce the possibility of deficits

1. Planning the event
 - Do not design a trip at times of the year where you are likely to get fewer participants, e.g., from just before Christmas to a week or two into the New Year, and off-season times like November or April.
 - Do not begin a trip on a Thursday because often people cannot get that day off.
 - Ask for advice from experienced members or your Executive.
 - Document all financial calculations. Be able to prove your calculations to others.
 - Do your trip planning and advertising early so as to take into account strict refund deadlines your accommodation may impose.
2. Advertising
 - Attend the OHOC Trip Information Night. You are the best person to explain your trip and convey your enthusiasm. Enthusiasm sells.
 - Advertise your trip in the *OHOC Update*, on the Hotline, and on the web site.
 - Advertise your trip on outside, physical message boards like that at M.E.C. and the Hostel.
 - Advertise through word-of-mouth (you, your friends, the Executive, relatives, etc.)
 - Advertise by phoning or e-mailing members.
3. Financial considerations
 - When signing up would-be participants for the trip, never guarantee a specific cost. The trip cost must be portrayed as approximate, and you must describe it as a range that depends on
 - the number of participants who sign up, and
 - an added 'just in case' contingency charge, the amount of which is at the leader's discretion.

- The deposit you charge should be based on the assumption that the fewest number of participants you think are needed to make the trip viable will actually sign up. Also, the total collected must at least equal the total amount needed to cover the cost of accommodation. Please remember that deposits you collect are non-refundable.
 - If you still have a cost over-run, just add it onto what participants owe. It is, after all, their trip and we must all take responsibility for expenses we incur.
 - Be content to book accommodation for fewer participants than you expect to be able to sign up, so that, if fewer sign up than expected, there isn't a deficit. If additional people are prepared to give you a deposit, simply find out whether your place of accommodation can add more beds.
 - Consider booking cheaper accommodation.
 - Consider booking accommodation that has more flexible policies about refund deadlines.
 - Be prepared to cancel the trip if not enough participants have signed up by the refund deadline imposed by your accommodation. When making a decision about whether to cancel the trip, leaders may consult with their participants to determine whether a higher per-participant charge is feasible.
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Night-time Outdoor Recreation Policy (Executive Resolution, January 2009)

With safety and insurance in mind, the following guidelines are mandatory:

1. Non-members are welcome but must ALWAYS sign up at the trip starting location and not at the destination parking lot.
 2. So that there is less chance that members of our group will become disoriented and/or lost, the outing leader should wear an armband or a distinctive hat or, better yet, wear clothing with reflective surfaces or tape.
 3. Use of the Sign-up sheets is mandatory.
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Day Outing Cancellation and Changes Policy (Executive Resolution, January 2009)

OHOC appreciates its volunteers. Thanks to leaders like you, our Club thrives. Hopefully you find leading to be an enjoyable experience. Please also remember that participants are looking forward to the outing and many will arrive, wanting to socialize and looking for some kind of outing, regardless of poor weather.

Changes to an Outing

An attempt by the leader or co-ordinator should be made to have changes of level, destination, etc., announced on the Hotline and on the web site. However, because people need time to hear about changes, the leader must inform the coordinator, who must then inform the Web Master and Hotline Co-

ordinator SEVERAL working days in advance. Sometimes, changes can also be announced in the *Update*, depending on publishing timelines, so try to notify the *Update* creator as well.

Using the Hotline to Announce Outing Cancellations / Changes

The Hotline should only be used to announce cancellations / changes if an announcement can be put on the Hotline several business days in advance. People usually check the Hotline on the Thursday or Friday before a trip; putting a last-minute message on the Hotline, even assuming the Hotline Co-ordinator was able to do this, would mean that many people would never hear about the cancellation/change.

Messages of a recurring nature will be posted on the Hotline for one or two weeks at most, due to the need to keep use of the Hotline as quick and as efficient as possible. The proper place for messages of a recurring nature is on the web site.

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Links

[1] <http://ottawaoutdoorclub.ca/trip/guidelines.php>

[2] <https://ottawaoutdoorclub.ca/club/trip/guidelines>